The Wretched Miſer: Or:

God's Revenge againſt the Oppreſſor.

Remarqueable in a moſt Miraculous Paniſhment inflicted on the Perſon of a Notorious Uſurer, in *Sunderland*, neer *New-Caſtle*.

Who having unjuſtly taken away two Kine from a poor Widdow, put them among twenty of his own, which were all ſtruck by the hand of heaven, and found dead the next morning; the Widdows Kine only eſcaping: which ſad judgement when the Miſer had ſeen, he fell a Curſing, Blaſpheming, and Deriding Gods juſtice in ſuch words as are not fit to be named amongſt Chriſtians.

Whereupon he immediately Sunk into the Ground above the waſte, and there continually Barketh and Howleth like a Dog Day and Night, ſtill beckoning with his hand for aſſiſtance, to the great terrour and amazement of all that ſee or hear him.

Conſume them in thy Wrath, conſume them that they may not be.
And at evening let them return, let them make a noiſe like a Dog, and go round about the City. Pſalm 59. 13. 14.

With Allowance.

Printed for *P. Brooksby* at the Golden-ball in *West-ſmith-ſeild*. 1676

89,874

UNIV. DUNELM.

-6 JUN 1953

The Wretched miſer, or, God's Revenge againſt the Oppreſſor.

THe cry of the oppreſſed is ſo loud that it pierceth Heaven, and reacheth even to the ears of the Almighty, who is graciouſly pleaſed to eſpouſe their Quarrel, and to engage himſelf in their revenge. For the oppreſsion of the poor for the ſighing of the needy I will ariſe, ſaith the Lord, &c. pſalm 12. 5. But in the cauſe of the Fatherleſs children and the widdow, God is pleaſed to declare himſelf more particularly concerned, and therefore whoſoever injureth or oppreſſeth them he provoketh the moſt high to wrath and indignation againſt him, of which we ſhall ſee a dreadful example in the enſuing Narrative.

In the County of *Sunderland* not many miles from the Town of *New-caſtle*, there lately lived a perſon, (whom I forbear to name) of great wealth; though not much reputation in the Country where he lived, for the vaſt ſums of money he had raked together were gotten by ſuch unjuſt and indirect ways that he was envyed by the rich, deſpiſed by the good, dreaded by the poor, and hated by all men; a wretched miſer he was that ſcarce allowed himſelf or his Family neceſſaries for the ſupport of Life, all the pleaſure he took in this world was in multiplying of his bags, thoſe idols of ſilver and gold, to which he conſtantly paid his Devotions, and to this end the buſineſs of his whole life was no other than to defraud

the rich, and oppreſs the poor, reſembling his father the Devil in this, that he went dayly too and fro, ſeeking whom he might devour, and having in him too much of the nature of the Pine-tree, which Deſtroys every thing that grows within the reach of it's ſhaddow.

Not far from his houſe there dwelt a Widdow miſerable, who really wanted thoſe neceſſaries the miſer was afraid to make uſe of; one that lived in a Cottage of *Turf*, more like a Den then a houſe, having ſcarce any other ſuſtainance for her ſelf and two ſmall children than what ſhe receiv'd from two Kine which ſhe had the priviledge to keep in an adjacent Common. Her Husband, it ſeems, in his life time owed this Miſer four pounds for rent, for a ſmall Tenement he had taken of him: and a very hard bargain it prov'd, for with all his care and labour, in four years time he could compaſs to pay him no more then three pound of the principal Money, for which he took his Acquittance, and ſhortly after dyed. After his Death, the Widdow was very much troubled, partly for the loſs of her Husband, and partly for fear of the Vſurer, leaſt if he ſhould come and demand the remaining twenty *S*hillings, before ſhe had wherewith to ſatisfie him, he might (according to his uſual cuſtom) violently profecute her to the utter ruine of her ſelf and children, to prevent which miſchief, ſhe wrought hard Night and Day, uſing all manner of thrift, and allowing her ſelf no more then would (as we ſay) juſt keep life and ſoul together: ſo with much ado ſhe had at laſt (to her great Joy) gotten up the twenty ſhillings, which ſhe

kept

kept carefully in a Pitcher under-ground againſt the Miſer came for his Money.

In very little time after he came and knocked at her Door, but ſhe overjoy'd that ſhe had the money ready, before ſhe would open the Door, ran and taking up her Pitcher, came to him very chearfully. Maſter, ſays ſhe, here is your money, and with it I give you a thouſand thanks: the Vſurer ſeeing the money, and fancying the Acquittance might be loſt or miſlay'd (as indeed it was) replyed to her, VVoman what doſt thou mean, to give me twenty Shillings inſtead of four pound? The poor woman amazed hereat, and not being able to prove the payment of three pound before, fell upon her Knees and beg'd him for God's ſake that he would take what was his due, and trouble her no more, for that ſhe had ſeen a Quittance (as the poor Creature call'd it) under his hand, for three pound paid by her Husband. But he very impudently Denyed the Receipt of any ſuch money, and Deſired that God would inflict ſome heavy Judgement upon him, if ever he ſaw a penny of it, and ſo going away with horrible Curſes, and Oaths, in his Mouth, threatning to ſue the poor VViddow for his money, he left her to her tears and prayers, miſerably lamenting her condition, and comforting her ſelf only with the words of *David*: ſaying; *The Lord will be a Refuge for the oppreſſed, a Refuge in time of trouble*; Pſalm 9. 9.

VVhile the VVoman was in the midſt of her affliction, weeping over her poor Infants, and every hour expecting the fury of the oppreſſour: he concluded upon a VVrit of Attachment as the ſpeedieſt way

way to get his ovvn (or rather the VViddovvs money) into his hands, vvhich accordingly he obtained in very fevv Days, and ſerving it upon her tvvo Kine, he took them into his cuſtody, and put them among tvventy more vvhich he had of his ovvn. The poor VVoman neither finding nor expecting mercy at the hands of a mercileſs man, deſires earneſtly of God that he vvould be pleas'd according to his gracious promiſe, to plead her cauſe, & to *deliver her from the violent man*. Hovvever she and her little ones vvent that night ſupperleſs to bed for vvant of milk, almoſt the only thing by vvhich they ſubſiſted. Little reſt vvas taken among them that night, the mothers heart vvas too full of grief, and the childrens bellies too empty of victuals to ſleep or be at quiet, and in this condition at the preſent vve leave them.

The miſer hardning himſelf in his wickedneſs, and having no remorſe of conſcience for what he had done, ſlept very ſecurely that night, abundantly ſatisfied that he had made a ſmall addition to his ſtock; little dreaming that he had gotten a canker to eat up his eſtate, or that the widdows lean Kine (like *Pharaohs*) came in for the deſtruction of the fat. But Walking in the Morning early to his Grounds he found it ſo to his coſt, for by I know not what miracle all his own cattle were Killed in the ſtrangeſt manner that ever eye beheld, not one remaining alive in the ground, ſave only the poor Widdows; ſome had their horns ſtuck faſt in the ground till they had beaten themſelves to Death, others were blaſted with Lightning, many riven in ſunder, and one prodigiouſly ſwell'd, with a kind of Corruption

boiling

boiling out of her nose, which ſtunk ſo loathſomely that none could indure to come nigh her. The miſer at firſt could not believe his eyes, till being fully convinced of the truth of the misfortune by his other ſences, he fell to ſtamping, raving, curſing, ſwearing, and tearing his hair as if he had been Diſtracted, one while blaſpheming againſt God, another while curſing and damning of the widdow and her Kine.

A Neighbour of his perceiving him in this outrage, was walking up towards him, to ſee what was the matter, and being come almoſt to him, he heard him wiſh the Widdow (ſuch a one) a Dog: there would be Carrion enough for her: immediately upon which words he ſunk by degrees into the ground, as far as his waſte, and fell to howling and barking like a Dog, after ſo ſtrange and terrible a manner, that he was afraid to come near him: ſo that making what haſte he could away, he reported the thing publiquely in the neighbouring Village, inſomuch that it was quickly noiſed far and wide, and immediately thouſands of people flocked from all parts to ſee and hear this Prodigious Miracle: and there is ſcarce a man in all that part of the Country, but is ready to teſtifie that he hath been both an eye and ear witneſs of this dreadful example of wrath and juſtice. For any perſon at Noon-day may both hear him bark and howl, and ſee him wave his hand, and ſtruggle, as it were, to get out of the ground, but all ſpectators are ſtruck with ſuch horrour and amazement, that none durſt go nigh him, either to view him, or relieve him.

The Magiſtrates of the adjacent Burrough, being informed

informed as well of the Injury the poor Widdow had received, as alſo of the wonderful judgement inflicted on the Miſer, repaired to the place, reſolving to relieve the former, and be ſatisfied in the latter, and when they had been confirmed in the truth of the whole matter, they admoniſhed the people in the firſt place to take warning by the ſad ſpectable before them, to take care how they oppreſſed their Neighbours, and of provoking God, eſpecially in ſo high a nature as that wicked wretch had done, and in the next place they thought convenient to order the reſtoring of the Two remaining Kine to the poor Widow, whoſe right they were: to which the Relations of the Wretched Uſurer moſt readily conſented.

The Woman being overjoyed at the ſight of her Kine, could not but return her hearty thanks to *Almighty* God for his wonderful Providence towards her, and like a good and charitable Chriſtian, Immediately fell to her prayers, that God would be pleaſed to give the wretch that had injured her, a ſenſe of his Sins, and if it were his bleſſed will, to take off his heavy hand, and to reſtore him to his former condition, but as yet God hath not heard her prayers, and what will be the effect thereof he only knows to whom they are made; ſure I am that it will well become every Chriſtian to make his peace with God in time, and from this dreadful example to learn to ſerve the Lord with fear and trembling.

FINIS.